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Jan. 11, 2023

RE: Unmet Housing Needs ARPA allocation

Dear Joint Appropriations members,

The Wyoming Economic Development Association urges the Committee to reconsider approving the Governor's Unmet Housing Needs Proposal by allocating \$15 million in ARPA funding for workforce and affordable housing. This pilot program would help collect the data Wyoming needs to further understand the housing needs in the State.

Workforce and affordable housing are critical needs in our communities and vital to the state's economic growth. When the local workforce can't find housing they can afford, the entire community suffers. Without affordable housing for our workforce, the state is losing millions of dollars in revenue.

The Wyoming Association of Municipalities conducted a housing survey and the needs in our communities are clear:

- 88% of cities surveyed said they need affordable housing
- 83% need workforce housing
- 63% need senior housing
- 46% of communities identified shovel-ready projects with the greatest need for water and sewer infrastructure

Constituents whose housing needs are going unmet are our essential workers; first responders, teachers, nurses and manual laborers. These are our friends and neighbors who should be able to afford to live where they work. If our workforce is essential, then their housing needs should be essential as well. We all thrive when we have a safe, affordable place to live.

Current conversations among legislators and the Governor's office have been encouraging. We sincerely hope housing remains a priority. A sufficient supply of housing supports vibrant communities and aids to foster an environment for economic growth for Wyoming.

WEDA joins the coalition of Wyomingites who are working to support workforce and affordable housing and asks for your support in allocating \$15 million dollars in ARPA funding for Unmet Housing Needs.

Sincerely,



Phil Christopherson

WEDA President